

A close-up photograph of several yellow tulips with green stems and leaves, set against a solid black background. The tulips are in various stages of bloom, with some showing multiple layers of petals.

Concerts at the Point
presents ...

**PARKER
QUARTET**

DECEMBER 10, 2023, 3:00 PM

**WESTPORT POINT UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
1912 MAIN ROAD, WESTPORT POINT, MA**

THE IMAGE ON TODAY'S COVER is "Yellow Tulips 2," a work from local artist Donna St. Amant.

Donna uses a high-resolution flat bed scanner as her "studio camera" and the fine detail it captures never ceases to amaze her. She records the close-up beauty of flowers, worn beached objects, and elements of nature that cross her path.

Whether a single bloom or a "medley" of treasures, the objects are placed directly on the scanner glass with the cover left open in a dark room. She builds depth and layers from foreground to background on the glass surface. Using a preview feature, she can see the image as it will be recorded and rearrange elements until ... it's just what she had imagined.

donnastamant.com

Concerts at the Point

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2023

PARKER QUARTET

Daniel Chong, violin
Ken Hamao, violin
Jessica Bodner, viola
Kee-Hyun Kim, cello

STRING QUARTET IN B MINOR, OP. 33, NO. 1

HAYDN

Allegro moderato
Scherzo: Allegro di molto
Andante
Finale: Presto

STRING QUARTET IN B-FLAT MAJOR,
OP. 18, NO. 6

BEETHOVEN

Allegro con brio
Adagio ma non troppo
Scherzo: Allegro
La Malinconia: Adagio – Allegretto quasi Allegro

INTERMISSION ...

WIG

DENNEHY

STRING QUARTET IN F MAJOR, OP. 135

BEETHOVEN

Allegretto
Vivace
Lento assai, cantante e tranquillo — Grave ma non troppo tratto
Allegro

The Parker Quartet is represented by MKI Artists: 70 S Winooski Ave Burlington VT, 05401



PHOTO CREDIT ©2022 BEOWULF SHEEHAN

Internationally recognized for their “fearless, yet probingly beautiful” (*The Strad*) performances, the Grammy Award-winning Parker Quartet has distinguished itself as one of the preeminent ensembles of its generation, dedicated purely to the sound and depth of its music. Inspired performances and exceptional musicianship are hallmarks of the Quartet, having appeared at the world’s most illustrious venues since its founding in 2002.

The members of the Parker Quartet serve as Professors of the Practice and Blodgett Artists-in-Residence at Harvard University’s Department of Music. The Quartet also holds a visiting residency at the University of South Carolina and spends its summers on faculty at the Banff Centre’s Evolution: Quartet program. For the 23-24 season, they are involved in a visiting residency at the Walnut Hill School for the Arts, in Natick, MA, working with gifted high school musicians.

The Parker Quartet's 20th anniversary was marked in the 2022-23 season with The Beethoven Project, a multi-faceted initiative which included performances of the complete cycle of Beethoven's string quartets; the commissioning of six composers to write encores inspired by Beethoven's quartets; the creation of a new video library spotlighting each Beethoven quartet; and bringing Beethoven's music to non-traditional venues around the Quartet's home base of Boston, including homeless shelters and youth programs. Concerts at the Point is presenting four Beethoven string quartets during its current season. We urge you to learn more about them at the Parker Quartet's YouTube channel. "Beethoven Illuminated" contains 19 professionally recorded lectures (about 4 minutes each) by members of the Quartet, highlighting each string quartet with context and musical analysis.

DANIEL CHONG, VIOLIN

Grammy Award-winning violinist Daniel Chong is one of the most exciting and versatile musicians of his generation. Since 2002, as the founding first violinist of the Parker Quartet, he has garnered wide recognition for his performances. Mr. Chong has received several awards and prizes, such as the Cleveland Quartet Award and top prizes at the Concert Artists Guild Competition and the Bordeaux International String Quartet Competition. In the recording realm, he can be heard on the ECM Records, Zig-Zag Territories, Naxos, and Nimbus Record labels.

In addition to the core repertoire, Mr. Chong is a strong advocate for new music. Some of the composers with whom he has worked closely are György Kurtág, Augusta Read Thomas, Helmut Lachenmann, and Chaya Czernowin. He currently serves as Professor of the Practice at Harvard University.

KEN HAMAO, VIOLIN

Described in the *New York Times* as having "especially eloquent playing," violinist/violist Ken Hamao is a dynamic musician renowned for his sensitive interpretation who has concertized extensively throughout the world in notable venues.

As a member of the Parker Quartet, Mr. Hamao is Professor of Practice at Harvard University. Prior to joining the Parker Quartet, he was a member of Enso String Quartet from 2014 to 2018. As a soloist, he has recently performed concertos by Giya Kancheli, Kurt Rohde, and

Dan Tan, the last with the composer at the podium. He also appears frequently with Argento Chamber Ensemble, East Coast Chamber Orchestra, and Talea Ensemble.

In addition to music, his passions include attempting to make a bowl of ramen entirely from scratch, cheering on his beloved Tottenham Hotspur while attending various live football matches around the world, and amateur woodworking.

JESSICA BODNER, VIOLA

Described by the *New York Times* as a “soulful soloist,” Jessica Bodner is the violist of the Parker Quartet. She began her musical studies on the violin at the age of two, then switched to the viola at the age of twelve because of her love of the deeper sonority.

Ms. Bodner is a faculty member of Harvard University's Department of Music as Professor of Practice in conjunction with the Parker Quartet's appointment as Blodgett Quartet-in-Residence. She has held visiting faculty positions at the New England Conservatory, Longy School of Music, Banff Center for Arts and Creativity, and Yellow Barn Festival. Outside of music, Jessica enjoys cooking, running, yoga, and hiking with her husband, violinist Daniel Chong, their son, Cole, and their dog, Bodie.

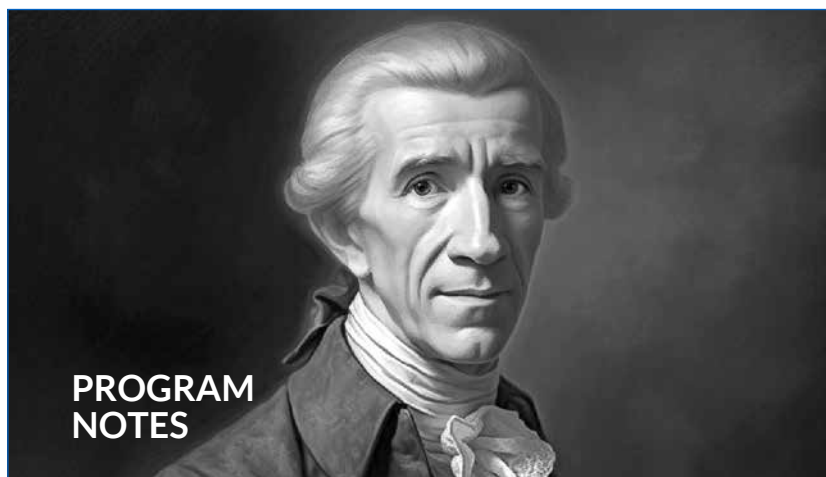
KEE-HYUN KIM, CELLO

A native of Seoul, Korea, cellist Kee-Hyun Kim has been praised for his “assertive style ... and vital musical spirit” (*Pittsburgh Tribune*). On faculty since 2014 at Harvard University's Department of Music, he is a founding member of the Parker Quartet. Some awards and distinctions include first prize at the Bordeaux String Quartet competition, the Cleveland Quartet Award, and 2010's Grammy Award for Best Chamber Music Performance.

Mr. Kim started his musical education at the Juilliard pre-college in 1992. He has attended the preparatory divisions of Korean National University of the Arts, where he studied with Myung-Wha Chung, the New England Conservatory, and the Walnut Hill School.

Ken plays on an 1844 Giacomo Rivolta cello made in Milan. He uses a custom-made bow from Benoit Rolland, made in 2007.





FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN (1732-1809)

STRING QUARTET IN B MINOR, op. 33, No. 1 (1781)

Allegro Moderato

Scherzo: Allegro di molto

Andante

Finale: Presto

It has been said that out of all his works, Haydn's string quartets are "the most faithful mirror of his human and artistic personality" because he began writing them at a young age and did not finish until late in his career. Over five years, from 1768 to 1772, Haydn published three sets of quartets, op. 9, 17, and 20. These early attempts were known as "divertimentos," characterized by five movements instead of what is now considered the traditional four-movement quartet. Nearly a decade would pass until the six op. 33 quartets were introduced in December 1781.

By standardizing the quartet structure, Haydn produced an incredible number of quartets without sacrificing quality, composing an astonishing sixty-eight string quartets, nearly triple those of Mozart and Beethoven. One researcher described Haydn's quartets as "multifunctional masterpieces, which offer pleasure for the performer and the audience." This quality is achieved partially by the instrumentation of the string quartet, four players: two violins,

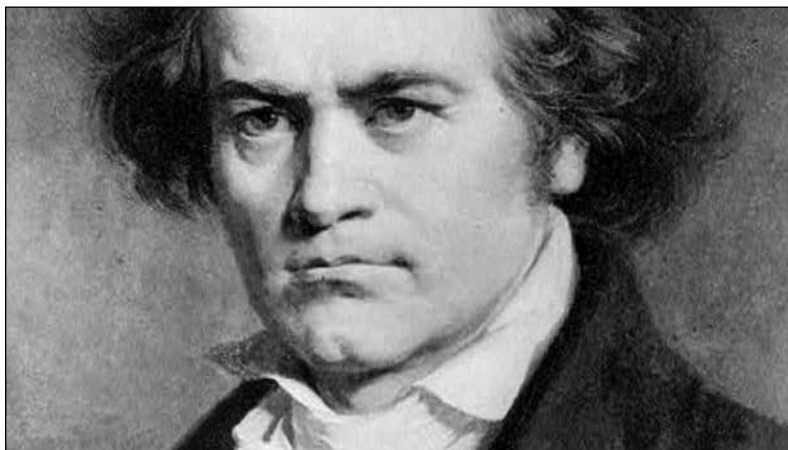
one viola, and one cello. Perhaps equally important as the number of players is that all four of them play string instruments. By making all four musicians string players, Haydn created a homogenous sonority that promoted a unity of sound.

Haydn announced the op. 33 set to potential subscribers as “brand new ... written in a new and special way, for I have not composed any for ten years.” This announcement gives rise to new works considerably more relaxed and confident than the op. 20s. The three op. 33 compositions offer bright and fast tempos, jovial sound characteristics, less emotional darkness, more major than minor keys, and a greater variety of finale forms than the op. 20's more intellectual passages. The op. 33 set appeared in Vienna just as the 26-year-old Mozart arrived there in pursuit of a freelance career. Haydn's new quartets inspired Mozart to write more quartets of his own, resulting in the famous set of six quartets that he dedicated to Haydn.

Opus 33, No.1 is cataloged in the rare key of B minor: rare for Haydn, and almost unique within the entire standard quartet group of works. He begins with an opening in D major and delays the swerve into B minor for a unique arrangement that affects the music from the very outset of the first movement, as though the opening bars are unsure whether to proceed in a major or minor key. The progress of the entire first movement advances in fits and starts, stuttering at times, halted by pauses, often changing its mood on impulse. It is rhetorical rather than melodic music, exploring along its way, and is over as soon as it reaches firm ground. The second movement is a brief *Scherzo*, alternating a clever main section with a glowing trio in B major. Following this, the third slow movement evokes the world of a stately, quiet dance that proves both adventurous and beautiful as it unfolds chromatically through many modulations. The finale, a breathless *presto*, is an exciting diversion that places the first violinist in the spotlight, requiring swift arpeggiation, fiddle-like string crossings, and a constant ranging over all registers.

Sources and excerpts: Chris Darwin, lifesci.sussex.ac.uk/home/Chris_Darwin/; Alex Knudson, boisestate.edu/presidents-writing-awards/the-father-of-the-string-quartet/; Review, cunc.org/article.cfm?articleid=8640.





LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)

STRING QUARTET IN B-FLAT MAJOR, OP. 18, No. 6 (1800)

Allegro con brio

Adagio ma no troppo

Scherzo: Allegro

La Malinconia: Adagio -- Allegretto quasi Allegro

When, in 1792, Beethoven left his native Bonn to seek his fortune as a pianist and composer in the cultural capital of Vienna, he was entering a world dominated by the spirit of the late Mozart and the still-living Haydn. "By untiring work you will receive the spirit of Mozart from the hands of Haydn," wrote Count Ferdinand von Waldstein in the composer's notebook shortly before his departure. Beethoven's early string quartets are clearly born of the tradition of his great predecessors, yet they already demonstrate new directions.

The "early" string quartets of op. 18 were not necessarily numbered for publication in the order they were written. Nevertheless, op. 18, No. 6 fell late in the series, composed principally during the spring and summer of 1800. The quartet's mood ranges from exuberance to melancholy, for which the last movement, *La Malinconia*, is named. We cannot say for sure whether the melancholy referred to in this

piece refers to Beethoven's beginning signs of deafness, but of all the early quartets, this is the most mysterious and personal in tone.

The first movement of Quartet No. 6 is a coherent sonata form, brisk and compact. In its rich dialogue between high and low registers, it may best be seen as a tribute to Haydn. The measures fly by, with each instrument working with varied rhythmic subdivisions of the beat. The opening of the second movement starts off traditionally, a gracious song-like theme that spotlights the first violin. But Beethoven quickly switches to the minor key, stating the contrasting theme with the instruments in unison, *pianissimo*. Contrasting textures, unexpected pauses, and stark couplings continue to inform this movement to its end.

The lively third movement, a *Scherzo*, is a rhythmic powerhouse of syncopation. It is like an explosion after all the subtle, delicate rhythms of the first two movements. But the fourth movement is where Beethoven clearly breaks new ground. It begins with what sounds like a second slow movement, but in fact is an extended introduction to a quick finale. Beethoven attaches to this introduction the title *La Malinconia* (melancholy) and the written instructions that "This piece must be played with the utmost delicacy." The finale begins as a buoyant rondo, but the chords alternate loud and soft, and its progress is interrupted by reminiscences of the *malinconia* theme. These themes battle on until the cheerful, *prestissimo* ending provides a glorious finish to the piece.

Sources and excerpts from: Parker Quartet, "Beethoven Illuminated," YouTube video 7; James M. Keller, Chamber Music: A Listener's Guide, 2011, pp.40-42; Program Notes by Dr. Jean Christensen, www.louisvillechambermusic.files.wordpress.com/2020/02/lcms-beethoven-emerson-program-notes-3_1_20.pdf





DONNACHA DENNEHY (B. 1970)

WIG (2019)

(AFTER BEETHOVEN'S OP. 135, II)

Donnacha Dennehy is an Irish composer who co-founded the Crash Ensemble, Ireland's leading classical contemporary music group. According to musicologist Bob Gilmore, Dennehy's "high profile of his compositions internationally, together with his work as artistic director [now artistic partner] of Dublin's Crash Ensemble, have distinguished him as one of the best-known voices of his generation of Irish composers." Dennehy joined the music faculty at Princeton University in 2014. He now lives in America and is Professor of Music and Director of the Sound Kitchen at Princeton. Called "thrilling" by the *Guardian*, and "arrestingly beautiful" by the *New Yorker*, Dennehy's music has featured in festivals and venues around the world.

COMPOSER'S NOTE:

I like that Beethoven's final complete composition, his op. 135 for string quartet, flies in the face of the narrative that many have tried to build around his late works, that of Beethoven the Romantic hero.

Beethoven was not just that, of course. Op. 135 hearkens back to the wit of his teacher, Haydn, probably the leading writer of string quartets before Beethoven himself. I love the joy and the playful pushing of form in this quartet, where wrong turns work like viruses in the music. My short quartet, *Wig*, builds off of these viruses in the second movement of op. 135.

Wig was commissioned by the National String Quartet Foundation of Ireland, with funds provided by the Arts Council of Ireland. This brief string quartet is part of the “Inspired by Beethoven” series that marks the Parker Quartet's 20th anniversary season. The composition is particularly appropriate for this program, which also features Haydn's String Quartet op. 33, No. 1 and Beethoven's last string quartet, op. 135.

Sources: www.donnachadennehy.com; wisemusicclassical.com/work/60689/Wig--Donnacha-Dennehy/





LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)

STRING QUARTET IN F MAJOR, OP. 135 (1826)

Allegretto

Vivace

Lento assai, cantante e tranquillo — Grave ma non troppo tratto

Allegro

Beethoven completed his op. 135 string quartet in October 1826 and sent the manuscript to music publisher Moritz Schlesinger with a letter saying, “Here, my dear friend, is my last quartet. ... Indeed it has given me much trouble. For I could not bring myself to compose the last movement. ... And that is the reason why I have written the inscription [over the last movement]: ‘The decision reached with difficulty—Must it be?—It must be, it must be!’”

Ever since the op. 135 quartet was published, critics and biographers have struggled to understand these words. Are they some of Beethoven’s famously mordant humor, or are they to be taken seriously? An anecdote reported by his close friend Karl Holz suggests to some that Beethoven meant the words as a joke. When Holz told an amateur musician that he must pay 50 florins for a copy of Beethoven’s op. 130 quartet, the man replied, “Must it be?” This exchange amused Beethoven, who immediately wrote a little four-voice canon with the

text “It must be! (Es muss sein!) Yes, take out your wallet.” Beethoven used this canon’s light-hearted theme in the last movement of op. 135.

Other commentators believe the op. 135 inscription was meant as a serious personal statement. Beethoven wrestled with the choice of words in his preliminary sketches and tried out alternative phrases—“the forced decision” and “the hard-won decision.” Biographer Lewis Lockwood notes that Beethoven frequently sought relief from the isolation of increasing deafness by writing similarly stoic comments in his daily journals. Deafness, severe chronic illness, and ongoing difficulties with his nephew Karl made him believe that he must live only for his art. The op. 135 inscription is echoed in a journal entry: “Endurance—Resignation—Resignation. Thus we profit by the deepest misery and make ourselves worthy...”

Unlike the radically experimental late quartets that preceded it, op. 135 is composed on a smaller scale and, except for its inscription, in a traditional classical format. Its tone is also quite distinct from the passionate expressiveness of the other late quartets. However, op. 135 is not a nostalgic look backward. Beneath what Lockwood calls its “mask of affability” are features of Beethoven’s late quartet style—sparse contrapuntal writing, chromatic distortion, and emotional extremes, from the second movement’s frenzy to the profound serenity of the chorale-like third movement. These elements combine with familiar hallmarks of Beethoven’s earlier style to convey a sense of reconciliation and resolve rather than creative retreat. The forward-looking picture is completed by the outcome of the finale’s musical argument. The groaning question “Must it be?” is answered in high spirits by the forceful “It must be!” When the question returns with even more anguish, the answer is again joyfully dismissive and adds a touch of mockery. Doubt is banished. After playful *pizzicato* and a hushed little dance, the movement ends with a triumphant flourish.

—Program notes by Robert Strong © 2015
(Courtesy of the Parker Quartet)



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